

NSC BRIEFING

15 July 1954

BACKGROUND

GENEVA CONFERENCE

- I. Communists expected offer Mendes-France Indochina settlement by his 20 July deadline.
 - A. Proposals almost certain not to match US-UK seven conditions.
- II. Communist package expected include cease-fire, partition both Vietnam and Laos, outline for political settlement.
 - A. Ambiguities should make proposals easier for French to accept.
- III. Communists expected make maximum claim on Vietnam, a lesser ^{ON} Laos, least on Cambodia.
 - A. Partition Vietnam (between 14th-18th parallel), general elections to follow.

- B. Control some part Laos, with remainder neutralized; agreement on steps toward coalition government.
- C. Neutralization Cambodia; some form recognition for "resistance movement."
- D. Such "neutralization" means ban on foreign military bases, sharp restriction defensive capabilities.

IV. Several territorial divisions Vietnam, Laos possible.

- A. Current Communist aim is division Vietnam at 14th parallel, large slice eastern Laos.
- B. French propose division Vietnam near 18th parallel (Dong Hoi line): willing accept Communist control small part Laos.

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- C. Communists might accept Dong Hoi line, if also given control of portion southern Vietnam plus strip of Laos.
 - D. Might also settle for partition both Vietnam and Laos along Dong Hoi-Thakhek line (reported French defense line both states) which would mean control northern half Indochina.
 - V. France, Associated States, have different attitudes toward proposals.
 - A. Unless Mendes-France recently stiffened, will like as not accept proposals.
 - B. Vietnamese (opposed any deal with Viet Minh) fear French sellout: may try by-pass French, get best possible terms for themselves.

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- C. Laotians reportedly split on
question recognize, negotiate with
Communist-sponsored "Pathet Lao."
- D. Cambodians, at last report, holding
firm against Viet Minh demands;
hoping for direct US support.

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